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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/747,957	12/31/2003	Hiromichi Yoshikawa	086142-0603	6957
22428	7590	05/19/2006	EXAMINER	
FOLEY AND LARDNER LLP SUITE 500 3000 K STREET NW WASHINGTON, DC 20007			SPISICH, GEORGE D	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3616	

DATE MAILED: 05/19/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/747,957

Applicant(s)

YOSHIKAWA, HIROMICHI

Examiner

George D. Spisich

Art Unit

3616

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 31 December 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/31/03 & 7/13/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_.

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Claim Objections***

Claims 1 and 11 are objected to because of the following informalities:

In claim 1, line 4, "seta" should be - - seat - -.

The second occurrence of "is" in line 1 of claim 11 does not appear to read properly. Examiner suggests using the word - - and - -.

Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 3 is unclear. It is unclear what is meant by the phrase "plurality of intermediate parts".

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-10 and 14-16 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hiroaki et al. (USPUB 2001/011810) provided in Applicant's IDS.

Hiroaki et al. discloses an occupant protection system (shown in Figs. 10-11) which prevents submarining of an occupant seated in a seat of a vehicle and having an airbag (36) disposed between a seat cushion and a seat pan (shown in Figs. 4-5B) and extending longitudinally along the width of the seat, wherein the airbag is configured to inflate to thereby push up the front of the seat cushion from below and a bag enclosure (44) extending longitudinally and enclosing an intermediate part of the airbag.

The bag enclosure encloses a plurality of longitudinal intermediate parts of the airbag located at the longitudinal center of the airbag and encloses substantially the entire airbag. The perimeter of the enclosure is smaller than the perimeter of the airbag in an inflated condition. The unrestricted portions of the airbag would inherently extend to some degree beyond the bag enclosure when inflated and not enclosed by the bag enclosure.

The longitudinal length of the enclosure is from about 40-100% or 50-90% of a longitudinal length of the airbag.

The bag enclosure is connected to the seat pan (via mounting holes 46) to restrict forward motion of the airbag when inflated and the airbag is positioned in a recess (42a) in the seat pan wherein the recess extends along the width of the seat. There is a step surface (portion of the recess) extending along a front rim of the recess to further prevent the airbag from moving forward when an occupant applies pressure to the airbag.

The relative position of the airbag(s) lifts the front of the seat and to at least some degree would also lift a side of the vehicle seat or at least a front/side corner of the vehicle as in Applicant's invention.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art Figure 4 (AAPA) in view of Hiroaki et al. (USPUB 2001/011810).

AAPA discloses an occupant protection system which prevents submarining of an occupant seated in a seat of a vehicle and having an airbag (44) disposed between a seat cushion (42) and a seat pan (40) and extending longitudinally along the width of

the seat, wherein the airbag is configured to inflate to thereby push up the front of the seat cushion from below.

AAPA discloses a gas generator (46) disposed in the airbag and fastened to the seat pan by a fastener (extension beneath the seat pan) passing through the airbag. The airbag is "sandwiched" between the gas generator and the seat pan.

The relative position of the airbag of AAPA lifts the front of the seat and to at least some degree would also lift a side of the vehicle seat or at least a front/side corner of the vehicle as in Applicant's invention.

However, AAPA does not disclose a bag enclosure for enclosing the airbag.

Kiroaki et al. has been discussed in the prior rejection and discloses a bag enclosure (44) for retraining and containing the airbag.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the airbag arrangement of AAPA by providing a bag enclosure as taught by Hiroaki et al. so as to provide a stronger airbag arrangement that resists movement of the airbag in operation to provide better protection against and occupant "submarining" in a vehicle seat.

Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Hiroaki et al. as applied to claims 1-12 above, and further in view of Stanger et al. (USPN 5,979,929).

AAPA in view of Hiroaki et al. has been presented in the prior rejection but does not disclose a cover (in addition to a bag enclosure) for covering the airbag, wherein the cover is configured to be broken or "deformed" when the airbag inflates.

Stanger et al. discloses an airbag arrangement having a cover (30) that is broken or "deformed" when the airbag inflates. This cover is considered a dust cover and seals and protects the airbag arrangement when installed in a vehicle. The teaching of this reference is to provide a "cover" for an airbag arrangement and the particulars of the airbag use is not of importance as a cover is taught by Stanger et al. for any airbag arrangement.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made provide a cover as taught by Stanger et al. in the arrangement of AAPA in view of Hiroaki et al. so as to provide a protected and sealed cavity for the airbag while allowing still allowing the proper inflation of the airbag.

### ***Conclusion***

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Yoshikawa et al. (USPUB 2005/0173898), Yoshikawa et al. (USPUB 2005/0046156) Brantman et al. (USPN 5,695,242), Itaoga et al. (USPUB 2005/0189749), Ruel et al. (USPUB 2002/0190548), Feldman (USPN 6,296,292), Reynolds et al. (USPUB 2003/0052519), Sakai (USPUB 2005/0104341), Lincoln et al. (USPUB 2004/0163872), Sakai (USPN 6,935,684), Ruel (USPUB 2003/0151234), Ruel

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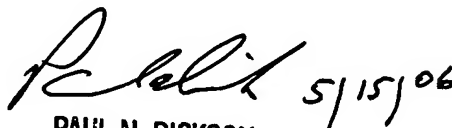
et al. (USPN 6,752,454), Yamamoto et al. (USPN 5,865,466), Takedomi et al. (USPN 6,896,325), Isono et al. (USPN 4,592,588).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to George D. Spisich whose telephone number is (571) 272-6676. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:00 to 6:30 except alt. Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Dickson can be reached on (571) 272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

George D. Spisich  
May 14, 2006



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